

Final Trip Report – Panoche Valley, January 14, 2012

First trip for 2012. Trip Leader – Lisa Myers

Quick Overview – This trip was put together at the last moment when an out of town couple requested a **Let's Go Birding** adventure to Panoche Valley. It did not take long to get a group of eager birders together to make the request a reality. We started at the Paicines Reservoir and soon found a Cassin's Kingbird. We never saw Bald Eagles here, but we had great views of a Golden Eagle and a Cooper's Hawk. We moved on to Panoche Road stopping at several different locations along the way. We passed our first of three Greater Roadrunners at mile marker 3.00 and shortly thereafter found several pairs of Phainopeplas. With each stop we picked up new species. Just before the Panoche Inn we passed a flock of Long Billed Curlews foraging in a field. Once at the inn we ordered our sandwiches and birded out back. It was while we were here we found a Merlin eating a songbird, sorry, could not ID the songbird. After lunch we worked our way to the new Griswold Recreation area out on New Idria. A bathroom in the middle of no where - could it really be true! We never found Mountain Plovers, but found some Mountain Bluebirds. The challenge of birding this incredible area is keeping the pace going. Each stop has the potential for more great birds, but it's always a race against daylight. So we headed back to Little Panoche Road and headed east. Nothing new was found at Shotgun Pass so our next stop was Mercey Hot Springs. The Long Eared Owls were found in numbers here. We even observed the owls dispensing owl pellets at our feet. One Rock Wren was also found out back near the cottages. The sun was starting to set so we worked our way to I-5. There was more to see so we'll have to go back.



All images taken during our day - Cooper's Hawk at Paicines Reservoir – Patty McGann / Long Eared Owl at Mercey Hot Springs - Diane Finke / The group birding Panoche Valley – Lisa Myers / Merlin eating songbird – Patty McGann / Panoche Inn stars & stripes – Lisa Myers / Male Phainopepla – Patty McGann / One of the many bunnies at Mercey Hot Springs – Patty Brown / Panoche Inn's Tsunami survival guidelines – Lisa Myers

Total Species Counted for the Day = 71 includes heard only (H)

Canada Goose	American Kestrel	Western Scrub-Jay	American Pipit
Mallard	Prairie Falcon	Yellow-billed Magpie	Phainopepla
American Wigeon	Merlin	American Crow in route	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Bufflehead	American Coot	Common Raven	Spotted Towhee (H)
Common Merganser	Long Billed Curlew	Tree Swallow	California Towhee
Hooded Merganser	Killdeer	Oak Titmouse (by few)	White-crowned Sparrow
California Quail	Rock Pigeon	White Breasted Nuthatch	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Western Grebe	Mourning Dove	Bewick's Wren	Lark Sparrow
Double-crested Cormorant	Eurasian Collared Doves	Rock Wren (by few)	Rufous Crowned Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	Greater Roadrunner	Marsh Wren	Savannah Sparrow
Great Egret	Long Eared Owl	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Dark-eyed Junco
Turkey Vulture	Anna's Hummingbird	Western Bluebird	Red-winged Blackbird
Golden Eagle	Northern Flicker	Mountain Bluebird	Tri-colored Blackbird
Northern Harrier	Acorn Woodpecker	American Robin	Brewer's Blackbird
Red-tail Hawk	Black Phoebe	Hermit Thrush	Western Meadowlark
Ferruginous Hawk	Say's Phoebe	European Starling	House Finch
Cooper's Hawk	Cassin's Kingbird	Wrentit	Lesser Goldfinch
	Loggerhead-Shrike	Northern Mockingbird	House Sparrow